DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 865 PS 015 352

AUTHOR Swick, Kevin J., Ed.; Castle, Kathryn, Ed.
TITLE Acting on What We Know: Guidelines for Developing Effective Programs for Young Children.
INSTITUTION Southern Association on Children Under Six, Little Rock, Ark.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 107p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Competence; Curriculum Development; *Day Care; *Early Childhood Education; *Educational Quality; Guidelines; Kindergarten; Microcomputers; Multicultural Education; Parent Participation; *Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Stress Variables; *Teacher Effectiveness; Technological Advancement
IDENTIFIERS *Developmentally Appropriate Programs; Professionalism

ABSTRACT

Various components of quality early childhood programs are detailed in the papers contained in this book. In the opening chapter, Mildred Dickerson and Martha Ross assess the current status of child care in the United States. Milly Cowles, in a chapter on curriculum, outlines the essential components of effective early childhood programs. Mac Brown reaffirms the value of play as an important ingredient of programming and identifies characteristics of quality programs. Kevin Swick points out the importance of involving parents in programs for children and suggests ways of increasing parent involvement. Kathryn Castle calls for developmentally appropriate programs which support the natural growth of children and offers recommendations for attaining this type of program. Margaret Puckett addresses the issue of expectations in the early childhood profession and emphasizes the importance of adhering to high standards. In a chapter on teacher competence, Michael Davis and Kevin Swick describe what is known about effective teaching and draw implications for educating teachers of young children. Hakim Rashid offers guidelines for assisting institutions in evaluating their multicultural components and discusses implications for teacher and parent education. Joseph Rotter summarizes the effects of too much stress in children's lives and indicates what can be done to help children cope. Finally, Michael Hanes explores the impact of technological change on the education of young children. (RH)

Acting On What We Know

Developing Effective Programs For Young Children

Kevin J. Swick
Kathryn Castle
Editors

Southern Association on Children Under Six

ACTING ON WHAT WE KNOW:

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of the nation is once again on the education of children and youth. With this renewed interest a great deal of attention has centered on what comprises a quality early childhood experience for young children. Unfortunately, the responses to this issue have often been designed to serve the special interests of adults and not the needs of children.

To address one area of concern having to do with the increased pressure to introduce formal academics and skills earlier in the curriculum than ever before, The Southern Association on Children Under Six developed a position paper: Developmentally Appropriate Educational Experiences for Kindergarten. This position statement articulates the developmental needs of young children and provides recommendations for a sound program of experiences to meet these needs.

In an effort to expand on the theme "appropriate programs for young children" the SACUS Board of Directors invited the authors of the papers in this book to develop in detail the various components of quality early childhood programs. Each author developed a particular theme (for example: curriculum) within the framework = ACTING ON WHAT WE KNOW = Guidelines for Developing Effective Programs for Young Children. In dealing with each topic the authors focused on what we know, guidelines for action, and challenges to be faced.

In the opening chapter of the book, Mildred Dickerson and Martha Ross provide the reader with an incisive assessment of the current status of child care in the United States. Their plea for action to

promote quality child care settings for children establishes the foundation of the many other issues examined in the book. Milly Cowles, in her chapter on curriculum, outlines the essential components of effective early childhood programs. In his chapter, Mac Brown reaffirms the value of play as an important ingredient of programming and identifies characteristics of quality programs. Kevin Swick points out the importance of involving parents in programs for children and provides meaningful suggestions for getting parents more involved. Kathryn Castle calls for developmentally appropriate programs which support the natural growth of children and gives recommendations for attaining this type of program.

Margaret Puckett speaks to the issue of expectations in the early childhood profession and emphasizes the importance of adhering to high standards. In their chapter on teacher competence, Michael Davis and Kevin Swick describe what is known about effective teaching and draw implications for educating teachers of young children. Hakim Rashid offers guidelines for assisting institutions in evaluating their multicultural components with implications for teacher and parent education. Joseph Rotter summarizes the effects of too much stress in children's lives and what can be done to help children cope. And finally, Michael Hanes analyzes the impact of technology and the importance of addressing societal change.

A common theme evident in all the papers presented in this book centers on what is good for children and how we can support the development of children in a productive manner. This theme is explored

from a curriculum perspective, teacher preparation point of view, parent involvement context, and from various other viewpoints. The present and the future are examined and suggestions made regarding the kinds of experiences most suitable to nurturing children for their optimal development and realization of human potential.

The intent of the book is to serve as a guide in making decisions related to the development of quality programs for young children. While the book does not contain answers to every question on early childhood education, it does provide a framework for thinking through the important issues related to the development of children and how we can support this development. The book is not meant to provide the final answers but rather to be helpful to early childhood educators in their continuous dialogue on the critical issues affecting children and families today.

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ACTING ON WHAT WE KNOW: CHILD CARE

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A major revolution has occured in American family life and child rearing practices over the past three decades. The sexual composition of the labor force has changed. The two parent, multi-child, male breadwinner family has almost ceased to exist. New patterns of family life and child rearing, two parent wage earners and single parent homes have changed American culture.

As a result, one of the most fundamental problems for families and the most pressing concern in the field of early childhood development and education is the need for available, accessible, affordable quality child care services. The urgency of the problem has been documented repeatedly. It is one of the most neglected areas of human need in the United States today and it extends across all socio-economic groups.

WHAT WE KNOW

The Need

Sixty-six percent of school age children, 50% of preschoolers, and 42% of infants and toddlers in this country have mothers in the work force ("Employers Seek Alternatives," 1984). There are 14.5 million school age children, 5.5 million children between three and five, and 3 million under three years who must be cared for by someone other than their mothers (Adams, 1982).

Exact data on the type of care provided for twenty-three million children is difficult to acquire. According to 1982 Census Bureau

figures, 15% of children under five are in group care; 30% are cared for in the child's home by a relative or non-relative; 40% are in out-of-home care. The remaining 15% go to work with mothers, are cared for in other arrangements, or are left to care themselves ("Census Reports," 1983).

The quality of the provisions available for children's care is a serious problem for parents, for the children's well-being and development and, consequently, for society's interest. Government regulation and licensing is one means of assuring that providers meet at least minimal standards. Parents, however, cannot find even this minimal protection for most of the children who need it. Spaces are available in licensed facilities for two million children under six ("Union Women," 1984). Only 122,000 of these spaces provide for children under three. Licensed spaces exist for only 126,000 school age children (Adams, 1984). Therefore, some 2.8 million infants and toddlers, 3.7 million preschoolers, and 14.3 million school children are receiving care in arrangements that have no kind of supervision or regulation.

Cost of children's care is a major concern for parents. Few families can afford to devote more than 10% of total income to child care. Yet the average cost of out of home care ranges from $50 to $100 per week (Walsh, 1984). Cost of infant care is at the upper end of the scale. Median family income for 1983 was $24,580 ("Poverty Among Children," 1984). For families in the middle income range, child

care costs of $5200 a year, second only to housing costs in the family budget, may be possible for a limited period of time. The need for care, however, goes on for several years, and many families must provide for more than one child. The situation is even more difficult for low-income families. (Poverty Among Children," 1984).

The Effects of Child Care

The growth of child care as a significant component of the child rearing system in the United States and other industrialized countries has occurred with very little knowledge of its effects on children, families or society. Most of the research on the results of care has been done in university-related center-based programs which are well funded and provide high quality care. These are, of course, the minority of programs. Very little, therefore, is actually known about the effect of day care on even the 15% of children who are in typical child care centers. There is virtually no knowledge of the consequences of child rearing in day care homes, baby sitter care, or other child care arrangements.

From a review of available research Belsky and Steinberg (1978) have reached the following conclusions about the effects of care on children.

1. Overall evidence suggests that the day-care experience has neither positive nor negative effects on the intellectual development of children from advantaged families.
2. Enriching center-based experience does appear to have a significant positive effect on high-risk children. Such experience seems to attenuate decline in test scores which typically occur in disadvantaged children.

3. In high quality care the child's tie to the mother does not appear to be disrupted. High quality infant care does not seem to lead to the caretaker's replacement of the mother as the child's primary object of attachment.
4. Studies of peer relations indicate that there may be a tendency for day-care children to be more peer oriented than are non day-care children. Day-care-reared children interact more with peers, in both positive and negative ways, than do age-mates reared at home. They also continue to interact more with peers as they grow older.
5. The social development of children in day care programs in this country results in greater aggressiveness, impulsivity and egocentrism.
6. Evidence suggests that children enrolled in day care for extended periods of time show increased cooperation with adults. However, there is significant variation from program to program.

While not directly related to child care, there is a considerable body of research which documents the positive effects on young children of appropriate experience outside the home. The most convincing evidence that good quality child care can have long lasting desirable effects has come from studies of the results of Head Start programs.

The consortium for Longitudinal Studies has reported that disadvantaged lower socio-economic group children who had been enrolled in Head Start programs of high quality had higher achievement scores through most of the elementary school years, were less likely to be retained in grade or to be placed in special education of remedial classes than were control children, and were more likely to graduate from high school. They also had higher self esteem, valued acievement more highly and had higher occupational aspiration, expectation, and attainments than did their controls. Children from all types of

families benefited from the programs and those whose mothers worked outside the home did as well as those who stayed at home all day (Lazar, 1983).

A twenty-two year study by the High Scope Educational Research Foundation has assessed the impact of the Ypsilanti Perry Preschool Project on 123 disadvantaged children. In the group which had had preschool experience there were significantly more young people who graduated from high school, who were employed, and who were enrolled in education beyond high school than in the non preschool group. Fewer preschool program young people were receiving welfare assistance; there were fewer adolescent pregnancies than among the control group; their detention and arrest rate was lower and their offenses were less serious ("Study Shows," 1984).

From the data available we can conclude that high quality care provides both opportunities for the positive development of children and beneficial social, economic and emotional support to families. Cautionary notes in the research which need further investigation and attention are those which indicate that children in care may become more oriented to the peer culture less oriented to adult expectation and cooperation and more hostile and aggressive, and those which suggest that parents may develop less interest in their children. One other concern is that we do not know enough about the effects of poorer quality care or of non-group care on children.

Factors Related to Quality

The most extensive study (Abt Associates, 1979) of factors related to quality of center-based care was conducted to examine the effects of certain regulatable characteristics on the quality of care for preschool children. Components found to have the greatest impact on quality of the experience for children were group size, the child-related training of head teachers and other caretakers, and staff-child ratio.

The study found that teachers in small groups of fourteen to sixteen children engaged in more social interaction with individual children and with sub-groups and spent less time passively monitoring children than did teachers in larger groups. Children in small groups were more involved, more reflective and innovative, and did less aimless wandering. They paid more attention to adults, were more cooperative and less hostile, and showed more verbal initiative.

Head Teachers with child-related education or training interacted more frequently and more effectively with children than did teachers without training. Children in their classes attended longer to tasks and were more involved in activities. There was also more teacher-child interaction by trained teachers in small classes than by equally trained teachers in larger groups. Both group size and teacher training were factors which were related to gains made by children on achievement tests.

Staff-child ratio differences did not affect children's achievement

scores. However, the ratio was significant in other indicators or quality. In classrooms with higher ratios of staff to children there was less authoritarian management of children. Adult relationships were better in those classrooms. Head teachers participated more fully in center-related activities such as planning, preparing materials and clean up, and there was more interaction between head teachers and other caregivers.

A more recent study (Vandell & Powers, 1983) used criteria of adult-child ratio, staff education, and amount of play equipment for evaluating quality. Children in centers rated high quality showed more positive behavior and more verbal interaction with adults. Less interaction with both children and adults and more aimless, unoccupied behavior was seen in children in medium and low quality centers.

Both of these studies demonstrate the importance of group size, teacher-child ratio and teacher training. Scales such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford, 1980) apply criteria which are based on knowledge of children and their needs. A study of preschool programs (Day & Sheehan, 1974) concluded that organization and use of space, children's access to materials and the ways in which these could be used, and the amount and type of adult interaction were the three main factors in program quality. These findings are also consistent with the criteria of knowledgeable teachers who know how to select and organize materials, space, and activities and with that of small groups and teacher-child ratios which promote interaction.

Licensing and Regulation

Since day care programs began attempts have been made to assure minimum standards of quality. These efforts have largely taken the form of licensing at local and state levels.

Efforts to establish federal day care standards, even for programs which receive federal funds, have been unsuccessful. Professionals, child care providers, and policy makers have been unable to reach agreement on requirements. State regulation of day care, begun nearly a hundred years ago, is less effective today than it was ten to twenty years ago. Several factors are contributing to its decreased potency. Child care centers and homes have proliferated. Budgets for licensing and monitoring have not kept pace.

The country is experiencing a powerful political move toward deregulation. Child care regulation is affected along with other areas of national life. It is ironic that there is a move toward decreased regulation at a time when reports of widespread child abuse indicate that more stringent standards and greater supervision are needed.

One of the erosive forces in the maintenance of licensing standards has been the effort of certain religious groups to remove church-operated facilities from state regulation. Anti-regulation forces are largely conservative fundamentalist groups. Though they are a small minority of the church groups which provide child care, they have great political strength, are exceedingly well organized, visible and vocal, and are able to develop among legislators tremendous

support for their causes. They have achieved exemption from licensing for church-operated child care centers in at least six states. Repeated efforts to secure similar legislation have occurred in a number of other states and numerous challenges to regulation are under litigation throughout the country.

There is concern among advocates about the extension of exemptions once they are initiated in a state. The issue has resulted in one state's eliminating licensing of all non-publicly funded child care centers. Private operators in another state, arguing that exemption of church-related groups places them in unfair competition with centers which must meet licensing requirements, have begun efforts to remove proprietory centers from social service regulation and place them, as small businesses, under the department of commerce where they would be regulated by a board composed primarily of private center providers (Dickerson, 1984).

IMPLICATIONS: WHAT WE MUST DO

Educators, economists, the business community and policy makers cannot afford to ignore the critical problems today's families face in finding available, affordable quality care for children. These problems affect children and their future, family stability and emotional well being, economic and business effectiveness, and the future of community, state and nation. The immensity of the need and the seriousness of its impact require a major national commitment of attention, energy and resources.

The Need

The most obvious need is for an increase in the number of high quality child care centers and other forms of child care. That such arrangements are not available on the needed national scale is primarily an economic factor. Good child care--that which provides small group size, low adult/child ratios, appropriate environments, materials, knowledgeable adults and effective administrators--is difficult to operate as a viable business and still be affordable to the families it serves.

A second reason for the scarcity of care is the fact that many potential providers--both early childhood professionals and sensitive, nurturing caregivers--choose not to enter the field, or having entered, remain for only short periods of time. Efforts to keep the child care costs within the range of families' abilities to pay result in exceedingly low salaries. The only way for centers to make ends meet has been to keep personnel costs, which make up 80% of most child care budgets, as low as possible. The work is consequently accorded low status by the public and by the workers themselves. Low status is also the result of the public's continued perception of day care as welfare service and of the common assumption that anyone can take care of children.

To remedy these situations policy makers, parents, the public, and providers of care must be made aware of the significant nature and impact of supplementary care. They must also come to recognize that

the economic system and parent's incomes cannot continue to be subsidized by the low salaries and consequent low standard of living available to workers in childcare centers and family day care homes. The importance of the caregiver's work must be acknowledged and rewarded so that more people who can provide nurturant, supportive, developmentally appropriate care are attracted into the profession.

New ways of financing good care also must be developed. What happens to children during the vulnerable early years is a national concern. At least as much attention and resources should be devoted to the quality of their life experience as is provided to that for their brothers and sisters in the public schools. Policy makers must recognize that parents can no more provide for the total cost of care and education of these children than they can provide for the appropriate education of the older ones. Government agencies at national, state and local levels must examine policies toward families with young children and allocate a fair share of resources to them. Direct subsidy of care, tax credits for parents, and tax benefits for businesses--all of which have been tried on limited and sporatic bases--have to be organized into a unified, effective system. In addition, we would do well to study the example other countries have provided us in creating effective family policies and programs such as paid maternity and paternity leave and child care subsidies.

Business and industry are beginning to recognize the economic advantages of assuming a share of employees' child care expenses.

Success stories, such as that of an Indiana company (Fenn, 1985) which found that job turnover was reduced from 300% to less than 6% per year, absenteeism dropped to less than 3%, morale improved and sales increased, are becoming more and more common. However, the advantages the business community realizes from employees' satisfaction with their children's care must also be documented and publicized. On-site child care facilities, benefit packages that include subsidies for child care expenses, information and referral services and flexible leave policies, are programs some employers have found to be effective.

The Effects of Child Care

The ultimate concern for parents, caregivers, specialists, and public should be directed to what happens to the child as the result of his experience outside the home. There is ample evidence that child care can have a positive influence on development. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that those programs which have demonstrated positive effects have been programs with specific qualities: they have been well funded; they have had trained personnel and adequate equipment; they have had sound theoretical bases and carefully planned programs. They have been shown to be cost effective, and this fact needs to be kept before the public.

Studies which show aggressiveness among child care children need particular attention. Are the aggressive and non-compliant behaviors reported simply a reflection of American values for assertiveness and independence? Or do they reveal a failure on the part of caregivers to

meet childrens' emotional needs and to provide the kind of guidance in social situations that enable children to feel good about themselves and others and learn appropriate ways of relating to other children and adults. It is our hypothesis that the training of child care personnel has not placed sufficient emphasis on understanding children and developing skillful guidance techniques to help children deal with feelings and build friendly, empathetic, cooperative patterns of interacting with both peers and adults. More research must be done to determine whether aggressive and non-compliant behavior in children is reduced by preservice and inservice training with this focus.

Any indication that mothers might have less interest in children placed in care at early ages is alarming. If our goal is to support and nourish the family, we must identify ways by which parents can be supported and made to feel consistently involved in their childrens' lives. Caregivers must be empathetic to the ambivalence, detachment, and guilt that parents feel when they relinquish a part of their children's care to others. They must also know how to involve parents and keep their interest in their children alive. They especially need sensitivity to cultural differences and ability to make themselves available as resources to parents. Here, again, training and support systems for personnel must be structured to help caregivers achieve such characteristics.

Factors Related to Quality

The early years of a child's life are especially critical in his total development. Relationships with adults and peers, the experiences

provided, the ways in which thrusts to learn are supported, the attitudes and values learned in day to day living have a cumulative effect on his future. Because of the importance of these years the quality of care is of vital consequence. A child in care is there all day long, five days a week, twelve months a year. It is the environment in which he spends most of his waking hours.

Parents have the basic responsibility for the quality of care which children receive. Yet parents are not always able to judge. Professionals must make more readily available to parents and the public what is known from research and practice so they will know what to look for in obtaining high quality care. Likewise, we need to help parents learn to read cues in children's behavior so they can recognize whether the experience is a positive one for development.

We now know too much to assume that "anyone" can care for children. We have evidence that the best programs for children are those with teachers who understand children's development and know how to provide for their education and, in addition, have understanding and interpersonal skills that allow them to involve and communicate effectively with parents and colleagues. Administrators must have further skills to support and meet the needs of personnel so that they, in turn, can better serve as resources to children.

Greater emphasis must be placed on making effective pre-service and in-service education available to all those who care for children. Traditional providers of training, such as community colleges and

universities, must design both curriculum and teaching methods to insure that the characteristics of personnel associated with quality programs are addressed and acquired. There is also need for additional avenues for the provision of training. Training inherent in the Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing process has been effective, but it has been more accessible to federally funded programs than to the private sector.

The family day care system offers a promising mechanism for educating in-home child care providers. In such programs a qualified early childhood professional assumes the responsibility for coordination, administration, training, monitoring and evaluation of a group of family home care-givers. In addition to education, the system provides a referral service and supplies support and resources for the often isolated in-home care provider.

Finally, the need for higher salaries cannot be ignored in a quest for quality. In the long run poorly paid workers have lower commitment to the work they do and to the children and families they serve.

Licensing and Regulation

Licensing is not in itself an assurance of quality. There are too many elements of quality which do not lend themselves to regulation. Licensing is simply permission to operate based on the fact that the state's minimum standards for protecting children have been met. It is, however, the only legal protection for the safety and well-being

of children in care. It is therefore imperative that states establish enforceable standards for all forms of supplementary care and develop monitoring procedures to ensure compliance. Advocates must continue to work for strong licensing provisions and to maintain achievements that have been made in regulation. We must make every effort to counter attempts to procure exemptions that weaken the total licensing structure. (For further discussion of this issue see Dickerson, 1984).

Possibilities for upgrading quality beyond that required for licensing include the processes of credentialing and accreditation (Morgan, 1979). Both processes have been implemented for the child care field and both merit the attention and support of advocates. The Child Development Associate Credentialling Program certifies that a credentialed staff member has achieved a set of carefully detailed competencies for working with children. More than twelve thousand child care workers have received the credential. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, through its division, the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, has completed field testing of criteria and evaluation procedures and has moved into the accrediting of child care programs which meet its high standards (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1984). The accreditation procedure provides for upgrading center quality and in-service growth through self-study. Accreditation awards recognition that the center provides a program in which parents and community can have confidence.

SUMMARY

Day care has become an integral part of child rearing and

education today. We know what children need. We know what makes them strong. We have evidence from research and practice to identify and design the kinds of programs that will provide the best environments for children's development and at the same time strengthen family life. Advocates must work together to guarantee children's future by providing for them a quality life today.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

Milly Cowles
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Recent emphasis on improving instruction in schools is certainly a positive step toward improving education. Unfortunately recent reports on educational improvement (with the exception of the Goodlad study, 1984) are remiss in not reporting the major impact early childhood curriculum has had on the development and learning of young children (Twentieth Century Task Force Report, 1983. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Scholars have documented the importance of the early years of life in establishing a positive framework which the child can use to learn and grow throughout life (Erikson, 1982; Bloom, 1964, 1981). There is also a cumulative body of knowledge that indicates a quality early childhood experience enhances the child in life and promotes a productive cycle of learning in the child.

The Impact of Early Childhood Curriculum

Quality early childhood programs have had many positive influences on young children. Early intervention programs, any of them beginning as early as the birth of the child, have improved the educational, social, physical and emotional facets of children's lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Colling, 1983). Long term, follow-up studies of children who experienced an exemplary preschool program indicate these children made significant cognitive gains as assessed by various intelligence measures, were highly successful in school (less often held back than their less fortunate peers), completed high school, acquired gainful employment,

often pursued past secondary training and education, and were usually contributing citizens of their communities (Lazar and Darlington, 1982; Miller and Bizzell, 1983).

There are larger societal benefits that ensue from effective early childhood education: increased educational attainment of the citizenry; improved functioning of all family members; reduced financial outlays to deal with problems that were prevented or corrected in the early years; and an increase in both social and economic productivity due to a more skilled populace (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Breedlove and Schweinhart, 1982). Perhaps the greatest impact of early childhood education is, as James Hymes (1982) indicates, the fact that it provides the child with a quality beginning and thus provides children with a vision of what they can become.

Components of Effective Early Childhood Programs

Although many different arrangements are used, most early childhood programs attempt to provide children with quality learning environments. Early childhood educators know that meaningful learning takes place through children's active participation with people, things and ideas (Swick, Brown, and Robinson, 1983). The curriculum is individualized to meet children's actual developmental levels. Social learning, especially as it is related to the children's ecology, is also emphasized.

Curriculum goals and activities are provided that facilitate development in the following areas:

Gross and Fine Motor Development: Curriculum such as balancing on one foot, hopping, skipping, throwing and catching objects build large motor

development and help develop eye-hand coordination. Activities in which children make simple designs with clay, sand, paint and crayons or copy them, learning to draw a person with at least six or more body parts are vital to the coordination needed for reading, arithmetic and writing.

Language Development: The curriculum includes many opportunities for the child to describe past and present experiences in complete sentences. Such specifics as pointing to and naming body parts; knowing and using both first and last names; listening to follow directions, to communicate ideas, and to answer questions; recognizing and describing the environment in regard to colors, sizes, and shapes are used in developing higher and better language usage. The more the emphasis is placed on language development, the greater the child's chance of higher success in school.

Auditory-Perceptual Development: Much emphasis must be place in the curriculum in these areas before any formal study of sounds in introduced. Identifying gross sounds and slight sounds even to whispers and finding the location of sounds are vital skills. Identifying rhyming words in familiar and then unfamiliar contexts, making up rhyming words, recognizing the same word repeated in a series, drawing sounds, and picking out spoken words that begin or end alike are other examples. Children need these kinds of exercises before letters and their sounds are introduced. They also need much exposure to the printed word through being read to and seeing what they and others see, say, and discuss recorded on charts and in other written forms.

Personal-Social Developments: Activities that help the child develop a sense of exerting control over and being a part of his environment are vital to his having the psychological energy to learn. Although simple to adults, such exercises as washing and drying hands, helping with housekeeping, using eating utensils, buttoning, and using the toilet independently, separating from the mother or primary caretaker, playing interactively with others, caring for personal things, and talking with other children and adults are important to being able to settle into school life. Through this area the child develops the vital sense of competence.

Auditory-Memory Development: Without adequate development here, it is impossible to observe, classify, and make sense of the world, much less ever learn basic skills. Activities such as observing and discussing differences in environmental objects, finding differences and likenesses in pictures, arranging forms in matched or directed sequences, connecting label words with objects (such as the sign "chair" with a chair), and tracing, coloring, and cutting evenly facilitate growth in visual-perceptual development.

Visual-Memory Development: Here we find a skill that is also vital for all later school work. Activities that help with growth are naming

familiar but out-of-sight objects looked at on another occasion, naming from recall a series of no more than three to five objects viewed and then covered, identifying missing objects from a series, reproducing a series of pictures viewed and then scrambled, and filling in parts of incomplete pictures.

Problem-Solving Development: The areas of development mentioned above are all components that are necessary for the development of problem-solving. Careful observation of children for forty years by Jean Piaget and others has guided our thinking in education to the startling conclusion that children learn more from each other than from adults, and that their social interactions with each other are crucial for social, emotional, and intellectual development. We know that children's ability to think is governed entirely by what they have seen, experienced and produced. They cannot and do not think as adults and should not be expected to do so. The child's reasoning must be accepted as it is. Their thinking and reasoning are perceptually bound. To develop problem-solving abilities, children need to be guided to observe and predict, and there must be a broad array of activities in which they actively and personally take things apart, put them back together, and see, for example, how wheels roll, what pulleys and levers do, and have the opportunity every day to dabble in making something that is designed and created by them. That is why unit blocks, "messing around learning centers", music and art are so vital to intellectual growth.

The areas of the curriculum illustrated above enhances a child's total development. They are important in two dimensions. First, they provide a quality environment for the child at one of the most crucial times in his or her life and second, they provide a foundation for the later times. Neither ought to be neglected in the life of a child. Each one deserves the best we can offer. Quality programs must be supported.

Developing Quality Programs for Children

Early childhood educators face many challenges in creating quality programs for young children and families. Critical to any long term advances in early childhood education is the education of parents and citizens about the importance and substance of good programs for children. While significant strides have been made in public advocacy

for children in terms of the importance of the early years, there still exists a great deal of ignorance regarding what good child care is about and how to support it. Even within the professional ranks there are "experts" advocating curricula approaches that are not based on sound child development knowledge.

Continuous efforts,then, are needed to educate citizens about proper child care techniques. Parent education efforts aimed at increasing parental knowledge and skills regarding how children learn and develop is one mode of meeting this challenge. Additional strategies include; the involvement of citizen advisory councils in both a learning capacity and a support role in implementing effective programs for children; the involvement of professional associations in articulating guidelines for citizens to use in developing programs; the organization of advocacy groups to influence public policy in favor of quality early childhood programs (Swick, 1984).

Quality programs for children are dependent on trained and qualified professionals who are skilled in providing leadership in all areas of early childhood education. Poor quality child care programs can usually be linked to incompetent staff who lack the knowledge and skills essential to designing useful environments for children and families. Professionals in early childhood education must take the lead in raising the issue of training and certification of child care workers.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING

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Identifying what is the best possible educational program for a particular group of children is a complex and challenging task. The field of early childhood education is in a unique position because virtually every educational innovation of the century has been field tested with young children. This climate of experimentation has provided teachers of young children as well as researchers the chance to examine many exciting ideas first hand. For example, Project Head Start included planned opportunities to experiment with various teaching strategies such as the "open curriculum", "cognitive curriculum", and many other ideas.

Emerging from the research and development efforts in early childhood education over the past twenty-five years are several findings relevant to any discussion of designing effective and appropriate programs for young children. For example, it has been learned that high quality programs for young children do make a long term difference, not only in academic achievement, but also in terms of human functioning (Lazar, 1977; Weikart, 1978). It has also been learned that human development, which education should certainly support, takes time and intentional effort, and that there are not easy paths to maximizing human potential (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Programs that plan the environment to include developmentally appropriate experiences for children are effective.

"Developmentally appropriate" are the key words as teachers plan

activities which will satisfy the needs and interests of the specific children in their care. Attempts to unrealistically speed up the development of children may actually result in retarding and slowing their development, as Piaget (1952) pointed out, and certainly can contribute to the psychologically maladaptive syndrome that Elkind (1981) has characterized as the "hurried child". Finding the optimum level of stimulation, motivational challenge, and balance of experiences to promote growth for each child is certainly a critical task faced by early childhood professionals.

Characteristics of Quality Programs

Programs of high quality, regardless of what model they follow, have similar characteristics which research, experience, and combined wisdom have shown to be related to children's success.

Play has long been recognized as the child's natural and most meaningful method of achieving his/her developmental potential. Authorities in early childhood education since Froebel have advocated concrete, hands on experiences where children learn through playful manipulation of the environment. Play is a self-regulatory experience where children satisfy their curiosity about the world and, consequently, build an understanding of how they relate to and can influence objects, people, and ideas. The dilema for teachers of young children has always been the recognition that children need not only self-directed play, but also direction and guidance from adults. The existence of a healthy balance between child self-direction and adult imposed direction is a characteristic of high quality programs.

A second mark of quality programs is that the teachers behave as

guides and facilitators of children's learning rather than the sole source of knowledge in the classroom. Children do need adults to assist in setting the limits of behavior, guiding their inquiries toward the most productive activities, and in symbolizing their findings through words, writing, painting, and role playing. Hunt (1961) has shown the importance of teachers "matching" activities to children's specific interest and levels of development.

A third characteristic of quality programs is the recognition that the curriculum needs to be a planned and organized set of experiences. Teachers need to know the program goals and more specifically, the particular objectives for a set of activities. Teachers need knowledge of the benefits of an activity for the child so that they are in a position to assess whether the child is acquiring the desired information or skill. This ongoing assessment and subsequent alterations of the activity require teachers to be "curriculum decision makers" (Spodek, 1978). Teachers need the flexibility and encouragement to make the alterations required to fine-tune activities to the specific needs of children within the everchanging context of a classroom (Goodlad, 1984).

Quality programs attempt to provide children with many opportunities to conceptualize their experiences through a variety of media. Each child must build his or her own understanding of the world with experience as the raw data from which meaningful understandings, ideas, and concepts are created (Piaget, 1952). However, simply providing children with experience is not enough, because children require adult assistance in seeking the meaning of these experiences. Experience is the raw data which must be played with,

explored, and discussed before the child can know a thing's limitations and its relationship to previously constructed ideas. Reliving experiences through play, language, literature, paints, music, role play, and movement helps children determine meaning and build concepts. High quality programs provide many opportunities to formulate concepts through the child's natural medium of play.

A fifth characteristic of effective programs for young children is their recognition that children have the full range of human emotions (Erikson, 1950). Young children experience the same range of human emotions as adults including love, anger, compassion, and outrage at some percieved unfairness. They differ from adults in that they are consumed by their emotions and cannot seperate their feelings from actions. Their emotional outbursts suggest that they actually feel emotions more strongly than adults, but for a shorter period of time. Quality programs recognize that children's emotional states govern their behavior. Therefore helping children come to terms with their emotions takes precedence over other classroom activities (Sigel, 1966).

A sixth characteristic of programs of high quality is their recognition that children do not think like adults (Piaget, 1952). Their relatively immature brain growth (Hart, 1983) and experience leaves children unable to reason abstractly, to see causes of behavior which are often hidden, and to mentally process the many pieces of information necessary to seeing the world from a mature perspective. Quality programs encourage children to work with concrete, real life experiences, and avoid an over reliance on abstract, pencil and paper type activities.

A seventh important characteristic of quality programs is that

they recognize the role of the building level administrator as crucial to classroom practices (Decker and Decker, 1984). Adminstrators in quality programs establish a cooperative partnership with the staff and see their role as facilitator and assistant to the teachers as they strive to enhance children's learning. Effective administrators attempt to create an atmosphere which is conducive, not just to the growth of children, but to the growth of adults as professional teachers.

A final characteristic of successful programs is their inclusion of parents and community in the planning and operation of the program (Swick, 1983). Programs which build a healthy relationship with parents enjoy emotional support, understanding of the program's activities, and a wide range of resources. Lazar (1979) had identified a strong parent-involvement component as a key to improving children's learning and their emotional stability.

Challenges in Programming: Confronting the Future

Meeting the challenge for the future is based on an understanding and acceptance that our society is currently going through a revolution comparable to the Industrial Revolution of the 1800's. Just as society went through a restructuring during the 1800's, so it will be during the current technological revolution. Changes have already permeated the social fabric with the movement of women into the labor force in a mass scale. In addition, the development of a knowledge base regarding young children has influenced the formation of various child care organizations. Future changes will certainly bring about further shifts in social structures (Toffler, 1974).

During this period of rapid change, it is critical that early childhood program leaders keep in touch with the parents and community they serve. Through continuous communications, parents and teachers can articulate responsive ideas to keep programs relevant to the families they support. Examples of strategies to use in this regard include parent advisory groups, self study teams, and periodic surveys of citizens to determine community needs.

Another challenge for the future is to emphasize problem-solving and thinking skills within the entire range of program activities. Future technology and corresponding changing cultural patterns will require sophisticated analysis and synthesis skills of today's children. Critical thinking skills will serve today's learners well into the future as they adapt and adjust their lives to our rapidly changing world.

A final challenge is to resist the desire to adopt faddish solutions to problems that can only be resolved through continuous methodical study and refinement. Human development is the time consuming process of years. Whereas innovations can assist, they can never substitute for the long term caring relationships necessary for normal development. There is no need to fear change as it inevitable and brings various opportunities to improve our way of doing things. Continuous program planning is the most effective way to deal with changes in the society and in the local program. The criteria for effective programs outlined in this paper can serve as guidelines in conducting program assessments.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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The development of effective programs for young children is based on a meaningful family-school partnership. Parents, being the child's first and most continuous teacher, have a powerful influence on the way the child develops and learns. The involvement of teachers and other professionals in supporting parental efforts to establish quality relationships with their children is the foundation of productive programs for young children. Parental involvement with those who design and implement early childhood programs for their children is critical to the success of the programs.

The Effects of Parent Involvement: What We Know

Parent involvement occurs at least at two levels: in the home and in contacts with school and community groups. Parents who are involved in these two social dimensions productively are generally characterized as 1) perceiving the relationship between their involvement and the child's positive development and learning; 2) functioning within a setting that provides them with enough support to be able to carry out their "involvement" role; and 3) skilled in understanding child development and aware of strategies to use in their involvement with children and teachers (Stinnett, 1980). Thus, a major effort of early childhood educators must be on helping parents see the importance of their role and to provide them with the needed skills

and supports to carry out their tasks (Swick, 1984).

The involvement of parents in supporting their children's learning and development at home and in school-community situations makes a difference in the quality of the program and in the lives of everyone involved in the teaching-learning process. In his work with parents of infants and toddlers White (1979) found consitent relationships between parental involvement and the positive development of children. Gordon (1975) in his studies on parent education and parent involvement found the children's development of language skills improved as a result of parent acquisition of some basic parenting skills. Further, a by-product of his work focused on the finding that both parents and children developed improved self-concepts and productive modes of interacting with each other. Other studies (Schaefer, 1972; Swick 1979) have substantiated the positive influence parents have on the developing child. For example, Watson, Brown, and Swick (1983) found correlations between the level of parent support behavior in the home and the child's school performance. They also found that parents who had support from neighbors and friends were more involved with their children than parents who lacked human supports. Schaefer and Hunter (1983) found that children of parents who had a high level of internal locus of control performed effectively in kindergarten and their parents received high involvement ratings from the teachers.

Parental involvement in the school setting has received validation from various studies. For example, Lazar (1976) found that exemplary early childhood programs that had a parent involvement component had a more positive effect on children than programs that did not include this vital part of education. Studies in New York

State (Irvine, 1979) found a similar pattern in that kindergarten children whose parents participated actively in the school's program were more successful than their peers whose parents were less involved. Swick and Duff (1978) identified three dimensions of parental involvement with the school: 1) performance of support roles with the school such as assisting on instructional tasks; 2) involvement in parent education projects; and 3) participation in decision making capacities. Research findings indicate that parental invlovement in these and other capacities -- at home and in the school-community setting -- have a positive influence on all members of the teaching-learning team.

Guidelines for Involving Parents

Quality programs include parents in the total educational spectrum. To develop the most effective parent involvement effort focus on the following as key points: 1) initiate contacts with parents as soon as possible; 2) provide support to parents so that they can be effective in their role; 3) develop a school setting where parents feel needed; 4) organize community resources to support parent-child interactions; and 5) provide parents with educational programs that increase their ability to function in their diverse roles.

An initial step in developing effective programs is the training of personnel in appropriate attitudes, skills, and knowledge essential to having a productive endeavor. For example, it is critical that teachers of young children understand the concept of parental involvement --- especially as it is related to the parents and children of their center or school. For examples: Are staff able to carry out a needs-assessment of family-school situations and design

program components to meet these needs? What attitudes are staff exhibiting toward parents and the involvement of parents in school functions? Teacher understanding of the major planning and implementation procedures related to successful family-school interactions is critical to quality efforts for children.

In planning program designs, three dimensions of parental involvement need attention: 1) parent education; 2) parent support of the school programs; and 3) parent participation in the decision making process --- with specific emphasis on how decisions can impact school improvements. Parent education arrangements should focus on meeting the educational needs of the parents you work with. For example, you may find that many parents are in need of information on community service while others need basic knowledge of child development and child care. Involving parents in supporting instructional and developmental efforts at the school can take many forms: parents serving on advisory groups, helping with school improvement projects, serving as tutors, participating in regular communication sessions as well as other modes of involvement such as assisting with field trips and/or serving as resource persons in the classroom.

The following are suggested guidelines to use in planning and implementing parent involvement programs.

1. Acquire an understanding of the needs of the families you serve.
2. Based on family needs and school resources develop objectives and strategies to involve parents in the program.
3. Develop and maintain continuous communications with parents regarding the development and learning of the children.

4. Give special attention to the services and supports that parents need to be effective with their children --- especially as related to "special needs families".

5. Carry out regular assessments of your parent involvement program to see if it is meeting the needs of parents and children you serve.

For more specific information on developing effective parent involvement programs read: Kevin J. Swick, Inviting parents into the young child's world. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1984.

Key Challenges in Organizing Parent Involvement Programs

Creating an understanding among parents and teachers of the need for a parent-teacher partnership is often the major obstacle to program development. While some parents see the importance of their role in the education of children, many parents see "education" as the total responsibility of the school. Through parent education sessions many early childhood programs have faced this challenge successfully. Utilizing television specials, local newspaper coverage, radio spots, parent awareness programs, and community sponsored parent development services, early childhood educators have fostered an increased awareness among parents and citizens of their critical role in educating children. Another challenge exists in overcoming teacher resistance toward the idea of parental involvement. Many teachers cite heavy teaching loads and parental attitudes as precluding having an effective program. These concerns can best be handled through staff development sessions where staff can assess the issues

involved and plan a useful approach to dealing with them.

Additional issues faced in developing functional programs include: 1) organizing program activities as related to the needs of the family-school arrangement; 2) planning program events to "match" available time of parents and staff; 3) involving "hard to reach parents", and 4) developing a team approach to implementing programs. While each of these issues contains unique problems, the guidelines set forth in this paper will help in preventing or resolving them.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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Increasing numbers of young children are attending some type of early childhood program. The majority of states now have mandated kindergarten programs and some are implementing programs for four year olds in the public schools (Castle 1982; Caldwell, 1983). Since it is anticipated that the need for preschool and kindergarten teachers will increase during the next seven years (Lamme, McMillan, and Clark, 1983), it is critical that children served in these programs encounter the best prepared and most qualified early childhood teachers.

Early Academics: What We Know

The push for early academics is becoming epidemic. Elkind (1981) describes the "hurried child syndrome" in which parents and teachers pressure children with unrealistic and inappropriate expectations. Elkind says "curriculum disabled" children are forced to deal with academic content beyond their capabilities resulting in school failure, stress related illnesses, depression, and other symptoms of our "fast lane" society.

Kindergartens have become pressure cookers in which children are expected to master what traditionally has been first grade content. Webster (1984) describes widespread kindergarten curriculum changes over the years resulting in more emphasis on content objectives, formalized reading programs, skills assessment, and use of workbooks with partial to total elimination of less structured activity-time and play. Spodek (1984 p.3) asserts that,

While there has long been a concern for teaching academics or pre-academics in kindergarten, the demand for such content seems to have hightened in recent years.

It is so widely recognized that kindergartens have become more like first grades with periods in the schedule divided into subject matter areas, with much emphasis on skill learning, and drill and practice, that many state, regional, and national organizations have responded with statements of concern. The Executive Board of the Southern Association on Children Under Six recently adopted a Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Educational Experiences for Kindergarten. The state organizations affiliated with SACUS of Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia have produced similar position papers wiich have been disseminated throughout those states. A task force of Minnesota early childhood educators has worked several years formulating a document on kindergarten education in reaction to developmentally inappropriate curriculum and methods and the discrepancy between what is taught in teacher education and what the five-year-old child experiences in the classroom (Billman, 1983). In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has assigned a task group to work on a statement concerning appropriate education for four and five year olds (Caldwell, 1984).

Guidelines for Early Childhood Programs

There appears to be a major descrepancy between what we know as developmentally appropriate educational experiences and what is actually

provided four and five year old children in school settings, the previously mentioned position papers offer valuable recommendations for appropriate kindergarten programs based upon well documented child development research. These recommendations provide useful guidelines for teachers and administrators. Some common elements from these recommendations include:

- .developmentally appropriate materials and experiences which encourage development in all areas: social, emotional, physical, as well as intellectual development
- .opportunities for participation in play as a valuable vehicle for learning
- .emphasis on experiential learning and the manipulation of concrete objects rather than the meaningless memorization of information and completion of abstract worksheets
- .appropriate assessment methods such as observations and informal assessments rather than standardized paper and pencil tests
- .parent education and involvement as an important ingredient for a successful program
- .continuous communication and shared curriculum directions and decision making among pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade teachers
- .teachers with teacher preparation in child development and early childhood education.

In their joint statement of concerns about present practices in pre-

first grade reading instruction and recommendations for improvement, seven national organizations (American Association of Elementary/ Kindergarten/Nursery Educators; Association for Childhood Education International/ Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; International Reading Association; National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Association of Elementary School Principals; National Council of Teachers of English) call for developmentally appropriate teaching materials and evaluative procedures that reflect the goals and objective of the instructional program rather than pressure for high scores on achievement tests. They recommend programs which encourage language development and an interest in reading through language experiences which integrate listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Through this approach children have direct experiences that offer opportunities to communicate feelings and thoughts rather than being taught with commercial readers and workbooks that may impede the development of intellectual functions such as curiousity, critical thinking, and creative expression.

The position statements from the professional organizations call for teachers who have academic preparation in child development and early childhood education. The National Association for the Education of Young Children recently produced Early Childhood Teacher Guidelines (1982) which have been endorsed by the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators and approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Colleges of education reviewed for NCATE accreditation must demonstrate that they meet the

curriculum standards in the NAEYC guidelines. These guidelines call for teacher preparation in general education, professional studies, and field experiences in early childhood settings. The teacher preparation curriculum emphasizes knowledge of child development; historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundation of early childhood education; and planning of developmentally appropriate content for early childhood programs. Elliot, Lessen-Firestone, and Federlein (1984) provide evidence that the NAEYC guidelines are being used by early childhood teacher educators and by NCATE.

While the early childhood education profession has provided useful guidelines for both developmentally appropriate early childhood programs and for early childhood teacher preparation, many states continue to experience the problem of teachers in kindergarten with elementary teaching certificates but with no preparation for teaching young children. Unfortunately, what is lacking are guidelines for hiring early childhood teachers for the early childhood years. It is time for hiring practices and teacher certification to reflect what we know about how children develop rather than what is convenient for school systems and administrators.

Early childhood certification varies form state to state. In some states the certificate is restrictive (N-K), in others it is broader (K-3). Lamme et al. (1983) report 20 different age or grade level classifications for early childhood certification with the most number of states having a K-3 early childhood certificate (13 states); nine states not having an early childhood certificate; and three states

with early childhood certification who have begun to limit access of elementary teachers to the designated early childhood levels. Unfortunately, Lamme et al. (1983) found thirty-two states which permit teachers with elementary certification to teach at the kindergarten level without preparation in this area. In addition, in the majority of states, administrators are not required to have any training in early childhood education. While early childhood certificate classifications vary, there is much support from child development research for an N-2 N-3 configuration (Erikson, 1963, and Piaget, 1972). Early Childhood programs stand a better chance of being more developmentally appropriate when the teachers in these programs have had the appropriate early childhood teacher preparation and experience. Teachers hired with adequate early childhood training will not solve the problem of increased pressure for early academics, but they will constitute a major step toward the solution.

Meeting the Challenge of Schooling

Early childhood education is facing challenging times. With increasing numbers of young children enrolling in early childhood programs, there will be increasing demands for well qualified early childhood teachers. At present, the public's attention is focused on the improvement of our schools. Early childhood teachers can become a part of the solution for better schooling.

Many educators are looking at John Goodlad's research for answers to improving schools. Goodlad's (1983) recommendation for improving

schools described in his book A Place Called School are based on a study spanning several years and data systematically gathered in over 1,000 elementary, Jr. High, and secondary classrooms. Goodlad's study provides a more comprehensive basis for understanding U.S. schools than any previously published (Tyler, 1983). In his book, Goodlad makes reference to the positive aspects of Head Start, nursery schools with parent involvement components, and several other common early childhood practices. He criticizes elementary classrooms for being too teacher dominated rather than child centered; for not using learning centers; for lacking such personal elements as plants, rugs, and interesting displays; for placing too much emphasis on competition rather than cooperation and constructive social interaction; and for detrimental use of ability grouping and tracking in the primary grades.

Goodlad calls for a broader definition of education as a lifelong process. He recognizes the increasing need that families have for child care and educational experiences outside the home for their young children since the number of parents working outside the home is increasing dramatically. Of special interest to early childhood educators is Goodlad's recommendation for starting children in primary education at age four. The justification he gives is that increasing numbers of young children already attend preschool, nursery school, day care, and other early childhood programs. He advocates starting children in school on their fourth birthdays so that entry into school and the beginning of the school year do not occur simultaneously. He feels this approach would maximize the chance for individualized instruction.

He also calls for school entry into a nongraded, multi-aged unit of four to seven year olds enrolled in primary education. The four to seven year configuration is based on child development theory and research. he cites the use of family (multi-age) groups by Infant Schools in England as a more acceptable practice than traditional grade configurations. A child would spend four years in the primary phase with the same group of children and teachers before moving on to the elementary phase. The curriculum for the primary phase would be based on what each child is ready for developmentally rather than on traditional graded curricula. Major emphasis would be on social and personal development with a primary goal of promoting self confidence in a child's abilities.

> Learning the fundamentals of reading, writing, spelling, and quantitative operations is important for young children but must not be allowed to occur at the expense of the child's self-concept, (Goodlad, 1983, p. 334).

Goodlad says nursery and kindergarten teachers should not be pressured to teach reading, spelling, or writing but rather should be encouraged to use games, dance, stories, building with blocks and the like to develop concepts. Reading and writing should develop as a natural progression from experiences to oral language to connecting symbols with objects and finally to more abstract printed symbols. It is doubtful that Goodlad's recommendations will ever by accomplished at the primary level without addressing the issue of teacher preparation. He indicates that present elementary teachers are not doing the things he recommends Therefore, it will be up to early childhood professionals to promote the importance of early childhood teacher preparation programs as one

solution to improving schooling. We must work individually within our own states to ensure that early childhood certificate classifications reflect knowledge of child development and that public school teachers are required to have early childhood education teacher preparation in order to teach young children through age eight. We must also help others learn about the new NAEYC Early Childhood Teacher Education Guidelines and the recommendations from the professional organizations' position papers.

The pressure to introduce academics earlier in the curriculum, the push to convert kindergarten programs into miniature first grades, the press to utilize achievement tests with younger children as a measure of teaching effectiveness, and the use in preschool and kindergarten of inappropriate teaching materials designed for older children are being experienced nationwide (NAECTE BULLETIN, Fall, 1983, p. 4). As early childhood professionals we have always been confident of our abilities to meet the educational needs of our children. With the nation's attention presently focused on education, it is imperative that we let others outside our profession know of the benefits to young children of quality early childhood programs. It is up to us to turn the nation's pessimistic mood toward schooling into an opportunity to promote a growing recognition of the vital role of early childhood education in the schooling of our children.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSION

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The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) addressed in addition to the deficiencies in both knowledge and skills of today's high school graduates, the issues of low standardized test scores, the over-looked gifted, diminution of "higher order" intellectual skills, and other identified indicators of "risk". Perhaps, the origins of many of these problems can be found in earliest school experiences. It would seem then, that beginnings, infancy (and before!) and early childhood should command attention as have endings, that is, high school graduation, college careers, and so on. The pleas for attitudes conducive to life long learning, and for a "spirit of academic excellence" are legitimate and supportable. Academic excellence has its beginnings in developmentally sound early childhood development and education.

Quality Early Childhood Development and Education; What Do We Know?

Earliest development and the crucial importance of nurturing in infancy and early childhood have been amply documented over a period of many years. (Bowlby, 1951, 1969; Erikson, 1950; Escalona, 1963; Greenacre, 1960; Honig, 1981; White, 1979; Yarrow, 1962). From these studies and others the elements of healthy beginnings in terms of quality of parenting, early personality development, sensory stimulation, earliest capabilities and needs, and the socialization

process are revealed. Further, infant studies have delineated the qualities in care-givers (parents and others), which ensure optimal growth and development, (Ainsworth, 1969; Brazelton, 1969; Caldwell, 1970; Honig, 1978; Phyfe and Perkins, 1981; Provence, 1967; Streissguth and Bee, 1972; White, 1975).

The importance of the early years in terms of cognitive development and behaviors, has also been established, (Bloom, 1964; Cazden, 1981; Elkind, 1971; Forman and Kuschner, 1983; Gordon, 1976; Hunt, 1961; Kagan, 1971; Kamii, 1971; Piaget, 1952; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969). That the foundations for later learning can be established during infancy and early childhood, has been documented.

Still others have documented the qualities essential to environments for young children both in home and out of-home situations, (Butler and Quisenberry, 1978; Caldwell, 1967, 1984; Elardo and Pagan, 1976; Grotberg, 1971; Hymes, 1955; Keister, 1975; Swick, Brown and Robinson, 1983). A number of child care licensing studies conducted at state and federal levels have proposed the goals and need for regulation of out-of-home child care to insure at least a minimum level of protection and provide perhaps, a preventative service, (Class, 1968; Morgan, 1972). These studies provide a common thread of information which emphasizes the importance of the experiences of the earliest years in the development of children.

Studies of young children in groups (out-of-home care arrangements, nursery schools, play groups, public schools and private programs) (Caldwell, 1970; Grotberg, 1971; Keister, 1970; Prescott, 1965, 1970;

Prescott and Jones, 1967; Provence, 1967; Roupp, 1979 and the Head Start research of the 60's and 70's) have revealed the importance of meeting individual needs while providing rich, stimulating, and satisfying cognitive and psycho-social contexts through which the child may grow and develop.

Recent reports of longitudinal studies which document the long term results of quality programs for young children provide further impetus to improving the quality of education for all children. (Gray, 1983; Lazar and Darlington, 1982; Schweinhart and Weikart, 1980). Quality early childhood programs can now be viewed, at least for disadvantaged populations, as serving a preventative role. That is, children "at risk" can be identified while remediation can be most successful; special education placement in later school years may be avoided; completion of school more likely can occur with fewer repeated grades and drop-outs along the way. The extent to which these studies might be generalized to other populations remains to be seen. However, the potential for improved early childhood programs can be a result of the use of these findings.

Challenges and Guidelines: Creating A Quality Early Childhood Profession

Based on "what we know," the following are suggestive of what should be expected of the early childhood profession. Whether the professional is serving young children through government agencies, private or public child care arrangements or school systems, colleges or universities or any of a multitude of avenues.

1. We should expect the translation of research into workable possibilities.

High standards for early childhood education programs are often misconstrued by the over zealous and the reactionary, creating watered-down academics and pressure laden teaching strategies. Many school leaders and early childhood program planners, responding to the new school reform movement, interpret the current education needs of the young child in terms of a "sooner is better" philosophy. Unfortunately, this practice becomes the "model" for other non-school programs and for parents ill-prepared to understand its implications. Many authorities caution that this kind of response can at best, be counter productive, (Elkind, 1981; Katz, 1983; Manning and Manning, 1981; Suransky, 1982). A number of state and national professional organizations, responding to the burgeoning use of inappropriate teaching methodology with young children have published position statements supporting developmentally appropriate strategies, (SACUS, 1984; TAEYC, 1984; VAEYC, 1984). Through these statements, "what we know" (research and experience) is translated into meaningful and workable prescriptions for practice.

2. We should expect specialized credentials for all who work with young children.

It is essential that educators and policy makers encourage the highest standards possible for early childhood programs. In recent

years, the development of the Child Development Association credential signaled a monumental effort which continues today to insure that individuals who care for and teach young children in out-of-home settings are competent to do so. The opportunity to obtain this credential should be readily available and vigorously encouraged. In this regard, professionals in teacher education can be guided by the NAEYC document, Early Childhood Teacher Education Guidelines, (1982). "These guidelines are based on the belief that the four or five-year teacher education program can provide the time and resources necessary to provide an education leading to the development of knowledgeable, flexible, and creative people capable of meeting the present and anticipated needs of children and families." (p. xi).

Pressure should be brought to bear on state agencies to require specialized certification of early childhood teachers. Some states in recent years, have deleted the early childhood (Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten) specialized certification plans in favor of more "flexible" certification programs wherein teachers might be assigned to any grade from Pre-kindergarten to Eighth grade. In these cases, experience appears to be the deciding factor. However, specialization is essential in virtually every profession. It is potentially costly (in long term consequences) to assume that anyone can teach the youngest pupils in our schools.

3. We should expect early childhood professionals to effectively communicate "what we are about."

The informed early childhood educator is in the most unique and powerful position for helping parents make wise choices for the growth and development of their children. Often, it is the early childhood teacher who represents the only source of informed guidance that is "free" and readily available. This places a tremendous responsibility on the professional to be adequately and accurately informed.

But helping parents understand developmentally appropriate programs is not the only place where communication is needed. Often colleagues, principals and other administrators, policy makers, neighbors and news media draw incorrect inferences from early childhood and child development efforts because we have failed to adequately convey the mission of early childhood education. Sharing articles, position papers, local professional gatherings, news releases, and day to day experiences with those outside the field but interested, can go a long way in dispelling many of the unnecessary pressures imposed on young children by the ill-informed.

4. We should expect that early childhood professionals will assume active roles in assuring the health and safety of all children.

Child care licensing is essential. Demographics abound with statistics relating to the numbers of children being served in out of home settings, one parent families, children cared for in home but by non-parents, the shortage of available day care and night

care spaces and so on. Professionals must insist upon stringent licensing standards and enforcement of those standards in all settings where children are cared for while parents are away.

While licensing standards, as a rule, suggest the minimum requirements for child health and safety, a system is needed whereby those programs which exceed the minimum standards can be identified. The NAEYC Center Accreditation Program is an encouraging step in this direction.

But it isn't just in the day care sector that the health and safety of young children is addressed. More often than not, from state to state, there are separate sets of standards for child care and "schools" public or private. Public and private schools which serve young children must also be held accountable to protective and preventative measures to insure the health and safety of their youngest clients.

The early childhood professional must keep abreast of all health and safety issues affecting children both at home and in out of home settings. The need for adequate health and dental care, prevention of disease through immunizations and other preventative measures, planning to meet the nutrition needs of the very young and monitoring the commercial markets which would exploit children with inappropriate and unsafe products are each areas in which the early childhood professional must stay informed. Conveying such information to parents and others who care for children is an integral part of the early childhood development and education profession.

5. Finally, we should expect all early childhood professionals to place the child at the forefront of attention and energy.

Dr. Edward Zigler, in a speech before the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (San Antonio, October, 1984), proposed a concept of the "community school" in which schools, public and private, and child care programs share expertise and facilities in providing for the health, education, and child care needs of young children and their families. This sharing of mutual concern for the child can lead to comprehensive programs for children and their families, which draw upon the best of what we know. It, indeed, places the child first and lays aside the petty kinds of "turf guarding" which unfortunately can occur when professionals fail to realize that many children are today not being served by anyone, and desperately need adequate care and educational opportunities. The professional perspective, then, insists on the best that can be for each and every child.

While one would not wish to "over sell" the role of the early childhood profession in responding to current school reforms, it does seem clear that many of the issues being addressed through the literature and the media today, are issues which do have their beginnings in the earliest years. In sound early childhood programs, children who are "at risk" are identified and age-appropriate remediation is provided. Attitudes conducive to life-long learning have their foundations in rich and stimulating programs in which adults,

specifically trained, interact with and respond to children in positive and nurturing ways. The attempt is made to meet all the child's developmental needs, physical, emotional and intellectual. The importance of the early years in child growth and development has been documented. The importance of acting on what we know cannot be overstated.

TEACHER COMPETENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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The success or failure of early childhood programs is linked to the quality of teachers who operate the system. While teacher competence has received much attention, very little change has taken place regarding the conditions in which professionals work and the initial and continuing education they experience. Early childhood education professionals suffer from low status both in terms of financial support and as related to their place in the community's value system. Not surprisingly, these same professionals often suffer from a lack of training which clearly delimits their influence with children and throughout the community. Plans to reach excellence in early childhood education must include an agenda for improving the education of teachers and enhancing the conditions in which they function.

Effective Teaching: What We Know

Professionals in early childhood education have a set of knowledges, skills, and attitudes that characterize their performance in contrast to the untrained practitioner (Katz, 1984). For example, professionals trained to work with children and families have a knowledge base of child development and learning, family dynamics as it influences the child's learning potential, and parent education practices that can support the development of functional parent-child relations. Additional indicators of effective teachers of young children include: an

attitudinal perspective that focuses on the potential of individual children, their parents, and the environment in which they function; a knowledge of the various modes of designing learning environments to meet the needs of children of varying developmental and ecological situations; an understanding of curriculum goals, methods, and resources appropriate for use with children; a knowledge base and corresponding skills of using developmental ecological assessments; a knowledge base and corresponding skill of using appropriate human interaction skills, and the ability to use this information in their relationships with children and parents.

Researchers have consistently documented that highly skilled teachers exhibit behaviors such as the following: they are effective in their verbal and nonverbal interactions with children and parents; they are skilled in planning learning arrangements that attempt to meet both the individual and group needs of children; they utilize a diversity of instructional strategies and resources in their classroom; they are skilled in using assessments that support the child's development and learning; they involve parents in the educational program on a regular basis (Goodlad, 1983).

Effective teachers of young children depend upon supportive environments in order to reach their full potential (Goodlad, 1984). Early childhood programs that support the development and continuing education of teachers are characterized as places of growth; adequate pupil-teacher ratios are commonplace; a plethora of quality resources are available in the center of classroom; the professional integrity of

The teacher is respected and nurtured; the curriculum is continually refined and adjusted to meet the changing needs of children and families; and the growth and renewal of teachers is fully supported (Katz, 1984).

Guidelines for Educating Teachers of Young Children

A major objective of early childhood education professionals must be to improve both the training of teachers and the conditions in which teachers function (Swick, 1984). Current rhetoric on the need for improved teacher education standards and experiences must be matched by actions that promote quality within the realities of today's educational situation. New designs for educating teachers of young children must incorporate the need for training both child care workers and more advanced professionals who teach and design curricula-program components. The career development ladder as experimented with in Head Start and now used in the Child Development Associate credentialing system is potentially a design, when appropriately modified, that can be used to meet the diverse needs of early childhood professionals.

All early childhood teacher education programs should incorporate the following guidelines in their designs for the initial training of teachers as well as assure the nurturance of the professional career life span.

1. Early childhood educators should have a strong general education including understandings of literacy, scientific, artistic, and related humanistic studies of man and the world.

2. Essential to the competence of teachers of young children is their knowledge of human development and learning with special emphasis on children from birth to nine years of age.

3. The skill of assessing children's developmental-ecological status and corresponding needs, interests, and abilities and using the results in designing appropriate learning environments is requisite for early childhood educators.

4. Teachers of young children need knowledge of and experience with instructional strategies, curriculum materials, and program designs appropriate for use with young children.

5. An understanding of special needs children and children of various cultural backgrounds and the application of these understandings to designing programs for children is essential to the competence of early childhood educators.

6. Parent involvement and parent education are critical components of successful programs. Skills for involving and supporting parents in the education of children should be included in early childhood teacher education programs.

Meeting the Challenge: Supporting the Development of Quality Teachers

The selection and training of early childhood educators must be given more careful attention; especially regarding the ethical behaviors expected of a professional working with young children. The high turnover and short career time spans of teachers and child development workers indicates a need exists to "extend" the concept of training to include

more advanced levels of functioning for teachers. Career ladder training designs should be expanded to focus on new roles for teachers such as "teacher-leader", "teacher-mentor", "teacher-supervisor", and "teacher-researcher"/ It is possible that current limited conceptions and perceptions of teachers of young children have created a framework that limits our ideas of how and what early childhood professionals can become. Ultimately the goal of improved early childhood programs is linked to new and improved modes of educating the people who implement the programs.

Standards for excellence in teaching must begin with the staffing of preschool programs. While it is desirable for preschool teachers to have degrees in early childhood development, it is unlikely to happen in the immdeiate future. What is realistic is the development of knowledgeable and skilled teachers in preschool programs. Training of child care workers should include at least the following components: child development, program planning, human relations skills, parent involvement, curriculum development, and child assessment strategies. Exemplary preschool programs have found it valuable to utilize a "master teacher" as a guide for associate teachers and for paraprofessionals. The "master teacher" should have both an advanced credential or degree in early childhood education and in-depth, successful experience in working with young children and families. Performance based teacher education programs such as the Child Development Associate credentialing system and the developmental approach to supporting teacher growth (such

as the career ladder program) are steps that have proven successful in improving teacher functioning in various early childhood settings.

A continuation of this effort to have quality teachers for children in primary school programs can be nurtured through providing incentives to teachers to move beyond minimum certification requirements and reach for advanced training in the fields of teaching and child development. The new Specialist Degree in Teaching being developed at the University of South Carolina is an example of one way to promote excellence in teaching (University of South Carolina Ed.S in Teaching Report, 1984).

Ultimately the search for excellence in early childhood education is linked to the development of a cadre of highly competent teachers. Improved working conditions in schools and child-care programs and improved salaries for teachers are essential supports for attracting and maintaining this quality teaching force. For too long societal expectations for teachers of young children have exceeded the resources and supports given teachers to accomplish their work. High expectations for teachers must be matched by corresponding action regarding the conditions we provide for teachers to pursue their jobs.

MULTICULTURAL ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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The field of early childhood education represents the starting point for multicultural education. It is during the preschool years that young children first become aware of racial differences (Goodman, 1952); an awareness that can eventually be channeled into bigotry, self-hate, pride, tolerance, or some variation on these themes. As Kendall (1983) has noted, "Racism is one of the most crippling diseases from which this country suffers. It affects each of us, whether we are white, red, yellow, black, or brown, oppressor or oppressed. Education can be a powerful force in the struggle to eliminate racism." As children move from the home into the early childhood education setting, their views of ethnic, racial and religious groups will either be reinforced or challenged by the "curriculum" to which they (and their families) are exposed. Thus the totality of experiences in early childhood education (e.g. curriculum content, instructional methods, teacher behaviors and expectations) all contribute to the shaping of the young child's conception of the culturally different.

There are three areas in early childhood education that are critical to any discussion of multicultural perspectives. They are 1) teacher education, 2) parent education, and 3) curriculum content. These areas are vital in that they focus on who educated the young child as well as the formal contents of that education. The discussion that follows will focus on these three areas in an effort to provide the educators of young children with a framework for analyzing multicultural issues.

Teacher Education

In order to provide their pupils with a multicultural educational experience, it is critical that their own education have a multicultural orientation. Traditional teacher education programs, however, have socialized prospective teachers into a Eurocentric, monocultural view of both curriculum development and implementation. As a direct consequence of this kind of monocultural orientation to teaching, the teachers ability to provide children with any significant multicultural perspectives is severely retarded.

How can teacher education programs integrate a multicultural perspective into the teacher training curriculum? One way is to take seriously the guidelines offered by organizations such as the American Association of College of Teacher Education (AACTE). Using the same categories as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education's (NCAYE) Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. AACTE has included the following among its guidelines to assist institutions in evaluating their multicultural components.

1. The curricula for the preservice teacher education program should prepare students a) to teach from a multicultural perspective and b) to work effectively with all students regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, sex, age, socio-economic level or exceptionalities.

2. The general studies component should provide the opportunity for students to study cultural diversity from both historical and contemporary perspectives including how that diversity has contributed to the development of and been affected by our society.

3. The professional studies component should include experiences that will allow students to understand cultural diversity

and its implications for the development of appropriate teaching strategies.

4. The teacher education faculty should reflect the institution's commitment to multicultural education.

5. Faculty with expertise in aspects of multicultural education should serve as a resource for schools in the area served by the institution.

6. The institution should provide the faculty with opportunities for developing and implementing innovations in multicultural education.

7. The teacher education program should be designed to encourage a culturally diverse student body.

8. The teacher education program should contain an ongoing, systematic assessment plan for evaluating and improving its multicultural education thrust.

Parent Education

A second critical area in multicultural early childhood education is parent education. For the past two decades, parent education has been stressed as a major component of quality early childhood programs. Parents are, without a doubt, the most important influences in the development of competence in the early years. The work of White (1981) clearly shows that the quality of parent-child interactions in the first three years is related to development characteristics manifested beyond the preschool years. Parenting, however, continues to be a responsibility for which most people receive little, if any systematic training. The need for parent education is therefore, beyond question. When we talk about parent education in a multicultural society, however, any potential "curriculum" is fraught with a variety of idealogical, cultural, and political considerations.

Traditional approaches to parent education have typically focused on the parent-child dyad regardless of the socio-cultural context out of which that dyad has emerged. Changing the behavior of mothers toward their preschool children has been the typical goal of traditional parent education programs. This is true regardless of whether the mother and child are from Harlem, San Antonio or rural Mississippi. This narrow focus on the parent-child dyad has obviously resulted from the myopic perspective of the most popular Western models of human development, models which fail to examine the multiplicity of societal influences on both individual behavior and dyadic interaction. To use Bronfenbrenner's (1979) terminology, traditional parent education programs have focused on the microsystem (parent-child dyad) while generally ignoring the macrosystem (the cultural and political context in which parenting occurs).

Early childhood educators must recognize that parenting occurs within the context of certain social, cultural, political forces that parents need to understand. It cannot be assumed for example that the parent education needs of America's historically oppressed ethnic and cultural minorities are the same as those of the Caucasian middle class. Nor can it be assumed that the parenting problems of oppressed groups result simply from their divergence from Caucasion middle class parenting practices. It is extremely critical that parents from historically oppressed groups develop a sophisticated awareness of the "macrosystem" along with enhancing parenting skills typically manifested in the "microsystem". As Bronfenbrenner (1979)

has noted, this kind of ecological perspective on human behavior and development is essential if the study of children and families is to move beyond the conceptual confines of traditional psychology.

This need to reconceptualize parent education from more ecological and cultural perspectives, however, in no way diminishes the teachers role as early childhood educator. It should be apparent that the early childhood educator's role as parent educator may be more critical than that of teacher of young children. While the typical teacher-child relationship lasts one or two years at most, a teachers impact on parents can extend for years and be manifested in parental involvement with other siblings. However, for early childhood educators to maximize each of these roles, it is essential that they be aware of a variety of characteristics of the families they serve. Mitchell and Watson (1979) have suggested eight characteristics of which teachers ought to be aware:

1. Characteristic communication styles--verbal and nonverbal--with the family;
2. The relative importance of individual vs. group (or private vs. shared) responsibility for family tasks;
3. The relative importance of individual vs. group (or private vs. shared) responsiblity for family tasks;
4. The qualities associated with family authority such as shared vs. hierarchical, warmth and intimacy vs. formality and distance, autoritarian vs. varying and whimsical;
5. Customary methods of behavior control or discipline;
6. Behavior and characteristics of children that are valued or rejected by adults;
7. The skills considered essential for achieving status in the family and cultural group; and

8. Parents' perceptions of their roles as teachers and as primary sources of knowledge and values.

Both a sensitivity to family characteristics and an orientation toward parenting that acknowledges ecological and cultural influences are necessary to a multicultural perspective on early childhood education. It is critical that this kind of paradigm be made an intergal component of early childhood training programs. A continuation of the ethnocentric, myopic approach to parent education that has typified many traditional programs can only promote a continuation of the apathy and alienation that characterizes many parents in oppressed communities.

Curriculum Development

In any discussion of curriculum as a multicultural issue in early childhood education, it is first of all useful to provide a working definition. Leeper, Skipper, and Witherspoon (1979) for example state that:

> Curriculum is what happens to young children in school... Currently the word program is used interchangeably with, or in place of curriculum. Programs included planned opportunities for experiences that may take place in the school but may often extend beyond the classroom into the home and the community. Planning for the curriculum or the program involves both the school and the parents. (pp. 181-182)

The cognitive and interpersonal strategies enhanced by broad multicultural education experience should be considered "basic skills" in the truest sense of the word. Gay (1979) has made the following observation concerning the relationship between multicultural education and basic skills.

The same categorical skills (i.e., social, intellectual, literacy, functional survival) that constitute the core of general education are equally applicable to multicultural education. In order to understand ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism in American society and the world, students, must apply the basic skills of general education when studying different ethnic groups' life styles, histories, cultures, and experiences. The complexity of the cognitive information and learning activities about ethnic groups that are designed for elementary school children must be consistent with their social, emotional, and experiential levels of development. Therefore, a large percentage of multicultural elementary education should operate at the instructional levels of introduction, awareness and consciousness raising. This is particularly true of the primary grades. (p. 330).

This focus on "introduction, awareness and consciousness raising" represents the foundation for a truly multicultural approach to curriculum development and program planning. Early childhood educators must constantly remember that the evolution of racism in America has been largely influenced by 1) a total disregard for the history of cultures of non-European people, 2) the cultural arrogance of European and their European-American descendents and 3) a higher value placed on material gain than on cooperation and sharing. The educators of young children have an opportunity to introduce their students to accurate historical and cultural perspectives within an environment conducive to the manifestation of altruistic behaviors. While it is obvious that multicultural early childhood education is not the only (nor necessarily the most effective) antidote to racism and ethnocentism, it is equally apparent that it is a vital first step in the process.

CHILDREN AND STRESS

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The joy of childhood is a misnomer to many children who suffer from the debilitating effects of situational and for some chronic stress conditions. These conditions range from family problems to test anxiety; from peer relationships to academic self-concept; and from imagined to real fears. Elkind (1981) writes that, "Today's child has become the unwilling, unintended, victim of overwhelming stress - the stress borne of rapid, bewildering social change and constantly rising expectations" (p. 3).

Children react to the stressors in their lives not unlike the adults around them. They often become physically impaired, emotionally distraut, and behaviorally ineffective. Unlike most adults, however, they have not had the experiences nor the education to understand the relationship between stressors and their reactions to them. A child who is left at a day care center may eventually develop a sense of belonging and security, but if the notion of helplessness and the underlying anxieties persist chronic problems are predictable.

Hans Selye, a leading authority in the research on the topic defined stress as, "...the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (1976). A child, for example, who outwardly displays aggression to others is likely not basically mean. Instead he/she is probably responding to some demand that was placed on him/her. This demand could range from physical abuse to abandonment. The fact that it is difficult to associate a given response to a

specific stressor and that children react differently to the same stressor makes it difficult to diagnose, treat, and for that matter prevent. Children, for example, react differently to the same TV program; some may display sleeping difficulties and attempt to emulate the characters while others may emphatically distinguish between the fantasy and reality that is displayed (Brown, 1979).

Although it can have a negative effect, all stress is not bad. In fact stress is a necessary factor is daily living. Without stress one would not physically be able to function. Stress is a motivating force; indeed a literal form of support. If one did not become stressed under certain conditions conspicuous demise could result. If a child displayed no fear of the harmful conditions around his/her the results could be devastating. The damaging side of stress is when it leads to chronic physical, psychological, social, or behavioral debilitation. Research is forthcoming almost daily in support of the association of chronic stress with destructive disease and illness.

The sources of childhood stress are endless but the following are examples of what can be found (Miller, 1982):

Homework

Death of parent

Tests

Divorce of parents

Separation of parents

Parent's jail term

Death of a close family member (Grandparent)

Personal injury or illness

Parent's remarriage

Suspension or expulsion from school

Parent's reconciliation

Long vacation (summer, Christmas, etc...)

Parent of sibling sickness

Mother's pregnancy

Anxiety over sex

Birth of a new baby (or adoption)

New school or new classroom or new teacher

Money problems at home

Death (or moving away) of close friend

Change in studies

More quarrels with parents (or parents quarreling more)

Change in school responsibilities

Sibling going away to school

Family arguements with grandparents

Winning school or community awards

Mother going to work or stopping work

School beginning or ending

Family's living standard changing

Change in personal habits (bedtime, homework, etc...)

Trouble with parents-lack of communication (hostility, etc...)

Change in school hours, schedule or course

Family's moving

New sports, hobbies, family recreation activities

Change in church activities - more involvement or less

Change in social activities - new friends loss of old ones, peer pressures

Change in sleeping habits, staying up later, giving up nap, &c...

Change in number of family gatherings

Change in eating habits - going on or off diet, new way of family cooking

Vacation

Christmas or other holiday

Any cultural-societal, home-family, or school event can be considered a source of stress including the positive events. The body does not distinguish between positive and negative stress. Heart palpitations and hyperventilation can result from fear as well as joy (e.g. people cry at funerals and weddings).

Children give us clues as to how they are coping with the stressors in their lives through many signs, some of which are more obvious than others. Here is a list of some of the commonly displayed signs of stress:

Crying

Thumbsucking

Wetting pants (age dependent)

Clinging

Unwillingness to talk

Withdrawal

Nervous tics

Fatigue

General irritability, manifested in either agressive or indolent behavior

Stuttering

Insomnia

Frequent use of restroom

Nightmares

Inability to concentrate

Incomplete homework assignments

Loss of sense of happiness

Hyperactivity

Grinding of teeth

Wringing of hands

Nervous laughter

Impulsive behavior

Allergies

Stealing

Accident proneness

Loss of or excessive appetite

Failure to thrive

Demanding

Complaining

Depression

Self-destruction

Passive-aggressive

Denial

Child abuse and neglect are rampant within our society. Much attention has been directed toward this most stressful phenomenon within recent times. As our society becomes more highly educated we seem to be losing a sense of relationship and personhood. Perhaps it is too simplistic to associate level of education within a society to degree of child abuse and neglect. However, if one thinks of the associated stressors that education provokes, such as, achievement motivation, mobility, dual career families, and so forth; then it is easy to see how children can become a burden rather than a joy. Parents are looking more and more to surrogates for child rearing and care. When an action-packed schedule is disrupted by problems identified with the child then blame and aggression is often directed toward that child.

This does not paint a very positive picture of parenting in today's society. However, compared to historical treatment of children one might say we have come a long way. If concern for children were not of paramount interest to adults there would not be so many related publications adorning the shelves of popular book stores; there would not be special TV programs devoted to the topic; and there would not be so many community action groups addressing the issue. Despite the

the statistics we are a much more civilized society than we were in our past. The pressures of the day, however, often turn civilized persons into barbaric animals.

History suggests that prehistoric parents treated their children with kindness and near reverence. When food, space and leisure were abundant, and when competition was minimal children were treated humanely. As the population grew and people began to come together in larger numbers new social orders became imperative. Moral, physical, and intellectual development became a parental responsibility and eventually a burden. Through many cycles of love and devotion to despise and abandonment children have been defined by the society which bore them. During medieval times, for example, infants were treated like playthings, often tossed about and as often dropped, as if they were footballs. As recent as the early 20th century children were sent into factories to work 12 and 14 nour days. Today we seem to be going through a period of mixed emotions about children - we want them to be adult and child all wrapped up in one package. We want them to fondle, cuddle, and parade for others; but we also want them to have all the social, intellectual, and behavioral skills expected of adults. To shed the burden of teaching these latter skills we have farmed our children out to others; day care centers, schools, and even MTV and Mr. Rogers. The stressors that society has placed upon adults have found their way to the offspring of this age.

Children today, in spite of all the material wealth at their

grasp suffer from the effects of stress as much as in any other time in history. The stressors have changed but the debilitating effects remain the same. As indicated earlier, as the body does not distinguish between positive and negative stress it also does not distinguish between stress brought on by being tossed about as footballs or being left behind to be comforted by a TV set. (For further reading on the history of childhood see, Children Through The Ages by Barbara Greenleaf, 1978).

Contrary to popular belief children are not fragile pieces of fine china; they are instead resilient pieces of fine humanity. The fact that most of them survive and become functioning adults, in spite at times of the odds, is a credit to their strength (Arent, 1984).

Perhaps the best place to begin to help children deal with stress is for the adults to ask themselves the following questions as posed by Swick and Hanley (1980):

1. Do I have a special time when I can get in touch with my personal feelings?

2. Do I have a good understanding of the way I relate to people and how these relationships affect my behavior?

3. Have I examined my teaching self for the purposes of developing methods for coping with stress? (p. 22)

Unless the adults first look at their own response to the stressors in their lives they will likely foster ineffective ways of dealing with stress, thus perpetuating the debilitating effects of this inevitable phenomenon of living. Modeling has been established as one of the most powerful teaching tools. If we model ineffective

responses to stress we can expect our children to act in kind. Conversely, if we learn and practice appropriate methods of stress management, we can foster the same in the children around us. Stress free adults promote stress free children.

The four C's of stress management are commitment, control, challenge, and choice. Commitment includes the absolutely necessary supporting relationships children need from the adults and peers around them. Control is having a sense of self-worth or self-esteem; having a grasp on a personal sense of direction. Children often forfeit a good bit of themselves attempting to be like someone else or living up to someone else's expectations. Children need to study their uniqueness and learn to take control of their lives. Challenge refers to an attitudinal adjustment, i.e. viewing identified problems as life challenges. Challenges suggest that their is a future, their is something to look forward to; problems are dead ends, they lend themselves to defeat (e.g. take one of your own identified problems and view it as a challenge and then notice your attitudinal change). Choice, closely related to the other C's, gives the child the authority and responsibility to make decisions as to how he/she will develop commitments, take control of his/her life, and turn life's problems into challenges. For, according to Jonas Salk, "Dignity becomes possible only with choice" (p.xv, 1983).

A number of activities can be used to help children deal with the stressors in their lives. These activies can be divided into three

areas: physical, psychological, and spiritual. The physical activities include: proper nutrition, exercise and movement, body awareness, and periodic medical examinations. The psychological activities include: relaxation techniques, guided imagery and fantasy, and developing relationships. The spiritual activities include: self-concept development and values exploration. There are unlimited resources available to address these three major areas but space limitations do not permit their discussion here.

The challenge to those who work with children is to recognize the impact that stress has on each child and that it effects children in different ways. Keeping a vigil eye and ear open to the signs and sources of stress as well as aniticipating children's reaction to stress can help to ward off the debilitative effects.

Approximately 20 percent of the children in school suffer from some form of performance debilitating test anxiety. With the current pressure on schools to demonstrate book learning this figure could increase dramatically, or worse, have more consequential effects on children (e.g. the suicide rate among children is on the rise). At no other time in history is the need for effective stress management more critical than it is today as the pressure to perform is so evident.

Children and parents need to be helped by educated professionals to develop commitments, to take control, to see life's challenges, and to make appropriate choices. For as Hans Selye said, "It is not life that kills people, it is their reaction to it" (1976).

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND EDUCATING YOUNG CHILDREN

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There he sat, this man with many years of formal education, facing a piece of equipment which held the promise of opening new frontiers. After twenty minutes of fumbling and poking, the power supply switch was located and the machine was activated. A short time later, this man, trained in FORTRAN, the computer language of his graduate school days, succeeded in communicating a simple command and the machine performed the task with astonishing speed. Unlike the calculators of fifteen years ago, there was no whirring of gears; there were no levers to be pulled. The next step was to organize simple commands into the most elementary program offered by the three instructional manuals which had accompanied the new machine. After a dozen failed attempts, a fourteen year old, wiser in the ways of the BASIC language understood by the machine, rescued her father, and corrected a minor error. In a fraction of a second, the elementary program was executed.

This scene, no doubt, has been repeated in countless homes as thousands of parents have learned to operate microcomputers with the able instruction of their children. The magnitude of the technological changes that have occurred in the last two decades is only partially reflected in this brief encounter between the author, his daughter, and this product of new technology, the microcomputer.

While the appearance of microcomputers in homes and classrooms represents one of the most obvious changes a number of equally powerful

changes have occured that have broadened the impact of new technologies beyond the current interest in computer literacy and learning computer programming languages. The purpose of this paper is to review the impact of recent technological developments with particular interest in the influences which will shape the lives of today's young children as they approach adulthood in the 21st century. In closing, the discussion will return to the concerns for early childhood classrooms of today, and, with a recognition of the historical context of current practice, to the inter-relatedness of social change and educational practice.

Microchips and a Look to the Future

In the late 1960's and the early 1970's, the developing trend in integrated circuitry technology was to place larger numbers of electronic components in a smaller area of silicon. The successful production of a miniaturized circuitry meant that as many as 10,000 transistors could be replaced by a small piece of semiconductor material less than one-quarter of an inch square. This extremely small size led to the name, microprocessor. The microchip, as it has become known, made possible a whole new era in microelectronics. Functions previously performed by massive pieces of equipment, costing thousands of dollars, can now be handled by a microprocessor-based system occupying a desk top and costing only a few hundred dollars. The microprocessor has found its way into household appliances, automobiles, wrist watches and a wide range of toys that have

become as common as blocks in the young child's playroom. It is, indeed, surprising the number of diverse influences that can be attributed to advances in microelectronics. As is the case with most technological advances, these influences are far removed from the technology of microelectronics which provided the focus for the initial improvements (Simon, 1983).

The transition from an industrial society to an information society is based to a large extent on the power of the microchip and microprocessor. The transition is much more subtle than many recognize and, in a number of ways, reaches into every day life to alter the course of development for our society.

As young children learn to play with video games, miniature robots and hand-held electronic teaching devices, significant changes are occurring in the adult world of work. As an example, a recent report estimated that 4,000 robots are currectly working in United States industry. In Japan, it is estimated that approximately 16,000 robots are being used in industry. Estimates indicate that the number of robots in U. S. industry will increase to 50,000 in the next ten years. The installation of this number of robots could replace up to three million of the manufacturing workers now employed in machining, metal working, materials handling and similar jobs. While skilled workers are likely to find sufficient job opportunities, unskilled workers probably will not. Following this trend, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a shortage of 557,000 computer operators, system analysts, and technicians by the year 1990.

At the same time, recent major studies of literacy and computational skills reveal another aspect of the changes occurring in our society. The Adult Performance Level Project at the University of Texas reported that 32.9 percent of the adult population are unable to do basic computations--that amounts to 52.1 million people. More that 21 percent of the adult population are functionally incompetent readers--that represents 34.3 million people. Similarly, the National Assessment of Education Progress reported in 1981 that students appeared satisfied with initial interpretations of the materials they read and seemed puzzled at requests to explain or defend their responses. When questioned many students felt they will emerge into an electronic world of work that will require little reading. The evidence is to the contrary, especially if the recent information explosion continues at the current rate. As a referent point, it has been estimated that in order to be effective, the average person must master three to five orders or magnitude more information than our ancestors in the 19th century (Reddy, 1983).

The mass production of microchips, which form the central processing unit microcomputers, has reduced drastically the cost factor which had previously prohibited the wide-spread application of computer technology. Only a short time ago, access to sophisticated computers was limited to large corporations and research institutions. At this time, microcomputers are becoming as commonplace as cash registers in virtually every type of small business. The acquisition

of microcomputers by public schools has increased at a rate of 50 percent per year for the last five years. Because of the rapid change that is occurring, it is only possible to estimate the number of microcomputers in public schools. The latest estimate of microcomputers in public schools is in the neighborhood of 600,000 units (Luehrmann, 1984). In a recent survey of public use by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Center for Educational Statistics, approximately 44 percent of American public school classrooms had access to microcomputers. Of those elementary school classrooms that had access, 71 percent used microcomputers regularly for instructional purposes. Instructional use of other technologies is also increasing, with approximately 14.5 million children receiving regular instruction via television.

Perhaps the most challenging development for educators is the convergence of diverse technologies into integrated systems for learning. For example, networks of microcomputers in diverse geographical locations are being established via telecommunications. Communicating through ordinary telephone lines, students in different states can share information sources which were formerly available only in a specific geographical location. Information previously stored in hard copy, i.e., textbooks, paper files, have been converted to electronic media and organized into a database which can be accessed through a telephone line and a microcomputer. One such information service, Compuserve, now contains over 200 different databases,

including economic, business and general information. It has been predicted that within the next ten years that telecommunication with information sources will become as frequent as telephoning is today (Shea, 1983). The possibilities are truly exciting in view of the probable improvement and increased access to satellite communication that will occur in the very near future. Clearly the extent to which educators can participate in understanding and utilizing these advances will shape the future for today's young children and the children of tomorrow.

Challenging the Basic Values

The conventional wisdom of early childhood education, dating to the writing of Froebel, has been that the young child's world is distinctly different from the adult's. A portion of the adult's task has been to preserve this stage of development through a balance between the child's freedom to develop as an individual and the adult's obligation to impart the skills, knowledge, and values which allow the child to become a productive member of a larger whole.

The rapid changes that are occurring in society, partially due to the advances in technology, may encourage some early childhood educators to argue even more strongly for the need to protect the young child during the early years from these changes. As noble as this may seem, these changes are so pervasive that it is virtually impossible to isolate the young child from the influences of technological change.

Other professional educators view the demands for literacy in the emerging information society as a mandate for increased emphasis on reading and computational skills earlier in the child's education. This interpretation can be clearly seen in the current trends to begin formal reading instruction in preschools and nursery schools.

Balance is the key concept in the conventional wisdom of early childhood education. An overemphasis on the demands of the society or the needs of the child during the early years will likely short change the child and society. Balance is also needed in the selection of the content and process of instruction. In discussing related issues, the authors of A Nation at Risk recognized the need to balance educational instruction so that reading and computational skills are not emphasized at the expense of other essential skills, such as comprehension, problem solving, and synthesis.

Recognizing that change is a part of the young child's world, early childhood educators need to maintain a basic awareness of the technological advances that are rapidly occuring. By actively searching current information sources, such as news-oriented periodicals and professional journals, early childhood educators can assess the impact of social and technological changes on the classroom and the everyday life of the young child. Maintaining open communication with parents will aid in understanding how these changes are affecting the family life of the young child. Attending sessions on technology at professional conferences is an excellent way to gain new information as well as interact with other educators about technology and education.

Basic knowledge of computers and microcomputer programming language is becoming almost essential for all educators. To fully understand the potential of technological change, it is necessary to have some basic knowledge. Some vendors offer free instruction for educators and virtually every state has a college or university which offers introductory courses on microcomputer for educators. In fact, nearly half of the states are requiring or are considering requiring computer literacy for teacher certification (Barbour, 1984).

Educators who explore the potential applications of microcomputers to the tasks of teaching will be well rewarded with a clearer understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of microcomputers. Recordkeeping and program planning are two major tasks for all educators which can be efficiently processed on a microcomputer. By exploring these applications, educators come to know, first-hand, the potential of microcomputers in the instructional setting.

Looking Ahead in Early Education

The challenge for future early childhood educators is awesome. With a heritage of humanistic concern for the child, the realities of a future with increasingly complex demands may be the impetus that generates a new analysis of the unique role that early childhood programs can play in the life span educational process that will be an integral part of life in the 21st century. Perhaps there will be a realization that in the early years of the child's life, the foundation for later development is formed not in specific facts, but

in the structuring of thought processes. These thought processes will serve the child throughout the life span, especially in an environment in which the current answer will not result from the straightforward grouping of bits of information. In the near future, lower levels of processing, including the basic recall of facts and figures, will be delegated to pieces of memory equipment The human task will involve developing the organization and the functional strategies that each of these memory devices will use. Thus, an immediate task for early childhood educators is the development of carefully designed studies of young children's experiences which are critical to developing the ability to perform higher levels of cognitive processing. A better understanding of these processes will be essential in the design of instructional strategies which foster the development of higher level cognition. The purpose of this instruction will need to go beyond the basic notion of early advancement of children's thinking. The development of problem solving and synthesis skills will be essential for survival in a future world filled with complex interactions between humans and intelligent technological support systems. Each of these interactions will be surrounded by mountains of information impinging on each decision.

Technological changes present an important force in contemporary education. The influence of technology is impacting the content and process of education. Society, in general, is facing a new set of demands, not the least of which is maintaining a level of stability

which allows new members to be sufficiently acculturated to provide continuity and direction to future generations. Computers and computer-controlled equipment are the bases of subtle, and yet far-reaching changes that are occurring in homes, factories, and offices everywhere. The central message for early childhood educators in the recent technological advances has been stated by Olds (1981): "The idea that computers can make all of us inventors and creators of our own intellectual tools is difficult to express and understand, but it is the central idea for educational progress," (p.17).

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POSITION STATEMENTS FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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The Southern Association on Children Under Six

Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Educational Experiences for Kindergarten

1984

Developmentally Appropriate Educational Experiences in Kindergarten

The Southern Association on Children Under Six is a non-profit educational organization whose purpose is to work in behalf of young children and their families. One of its particular concerns is the development and dissemination of knowledge and understanding of young children.

The organization's eleven thousand members represent the wide range of people concerned with the education and development of young children. SACUS, through its history, has been supportive of its affiliate states to develop public school kindergarten programs and to strive for quality in those programs.

However, recent trends to incorporate developmentally inappropriate teaching strategies such as workbooks, ditto sheets, and formal reading groups as well as academic skill-oriented curriculum content in kindergarten, raise serious concerns. The Executive Board of the Southern Association on Children Under Six, therefore, has adopted the following position on developmentally appropriate educational experiences for kindergarten children.

Begin with the Needs of Children

A major mark of quality kindergarten programs is found in the relationship of learning activities to the children's developmental stages and needs. Quality programs use the child's natural learning abilities and interests to further his development. Thus, play is fundamental to the child's development and learning. In addition to these assumptions the following understandings regarding children's development should serve as guides to developing effective kindergarten programs.

- Kindergarten children constantly strive to understand and make sense of their experiences.
- Kindergarten children develop understandings through play and other natural learning strategies.
- The social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of kindergarten children are interrelated.
- While kindergarten children follow similar developmental sequences, they do so in unique ways and at different rates.
- Kindergarten children need adults to help them make sense of their experiences.
- The best learning environment for kindergarten children is one in which they can actively participate by manipulating objects and by expressing their ideas through many curricular areas such as music, art, sociodrama, puppetry, and science projects.
- Kindergarten children learn best when all of their development/learning needs and interests are nurtured through a broad and understandable curriculum and guided by a caring teacher certified in Early Childhood Education.
- The different learning styles, interests, and developmental needs of kindergarten children can best be facilitated through informal, flexible classroom arrangements which utilize interest centers and individualized activities and games.
- Kindergarten children learn best when the curriculum is based on concrete experiences to which they can relate in meaningful ways.

Designing Learning Environments to Meet Children's Needs

Kindergarten children are normally inquisitive, explorative and creative in their participation in the learning process. Their unique methods of learning should be supported. A rigid curriculum based on abstract, paper and pencil activities is not understood by them and interferes with their learning. The following guidelines are suggested for developing quality learning environments for kindergarten children.

- Select quality Early Childhood teachers who are knowledgeable in child growth and development, committed to children, and capable of designing programs that meet children's developmental needs.
- Design programs that have adult/child ratios which promote quality interaction in the classroom and allow for the development of close home school relationships.
- Design learning activities that involve children in using all of their senses.
- Create learning situations in which children can use both the real world and their fantasy world to experience the process of solving problems and creating new ideas.
- Capitalize on children's creativeness by providing dramatic play experiences, encouraging participation in artistic and musical expression and in scientific "hands on" activities.
- Respond to the many facets of children's development by including social, physical, nutritional, intellectual, and emotional "content" in the kindergarten program.
- Provide many varied opportunities for kindergarten children to use language. Avoid narrowly defined reading programs which emphasize de-coding skills and expect the same level of readiness from all children. To meet the diverse needs and levels of children use their experience as a basis for developing many language activities.
- Provide a participatory curriculum for fostering a sense of autonomy in kindergarten children. Encourage children's decision-making and design learning environments in which the child's needs, interests and discoveries are paramount.
- Utilize a variety of instructional approaches such as individualized learning and small group activities.
- Be intentionally personal in interactions with kindergarten children. Spend time listening to them and encourage them to express themselves both individually and in a variety of social situations.

A quality kindergarten includes many facets: the group planning of daily activities; individual discovery time, varied experiences with language stories and books, and other communicative arts, physical activity appropriate to the children's development, exploration activities by active manipulation of the natural scientific environment, opportunities for representing knowledge through social involvement in group living, role playing and other expressive means, program components that support children's health such as nutritious snacks and lunches, quiet time for reflecting on the day's activities; and many other indoor and outdoor learning situations.

Assessment, Helping Children Develop and Learn

Observations and informal assessments appropriate for kindergarten children are essential to understanding the many aspects of their development. Standardized paper and pencil tests are inappropriate for use with kindergarten children. Effective assessment attempts to insure that deficits are recognized, that remediation is designed, and that strengths are maximized. The following are appropriate guidelines for assessment procedures for kindergarten children.

- Assessment should be viewed as an ongoing process of analysis, a method of searching diligently for strengths and weaknesses so that individualized planning is provided for each child's development.
- Assessment techniques should be used in a caring manner that reflects children's sensitivity to unfamiliar situations.
- A variety of assessment techniques (appro-

priate developmental inventories, teacher observations, parent notations, and developmental profiles) should be used in continuous and flexible ways to help teachers plan effective learning situations.

- Assessment of children's development and learning must consider the "real world" in which the children live. It must recognize home life, cultural setting, and learning style orientation.

Toward Quality Environments for Kindergarten Children

It is crucial that schools provide children and families the best possible kindergarten experience. This experience must be based in knowledge that children develop and learn in a variety of ways. It must include responsive situations in classrooms in which children can actively engage in constructing, refining, and expanding knowledge through appropriate educational activities. All children, regardless of culture, handicaps, or other human differences, must have access to kindergarten programs that facilitate, not impede, their development. Teachers, parents, and other citizens must work together for programs that meet children's needs.

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